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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Letter dated 28 April 1995 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that in the context of the United Nations Year of Tolerance and in response to the appeal of the representatives of the cultural life of Georgia to convene an international forum to discuss ways in which the world intellectual community can counteract the manifestations of increasing intolerance and discrimination in many regions of the world, the Georgian National Commission for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Municipal Council of Tbilisi in collaboration with the Georgian "Fund for Democracy and Revival" have decided to organize an International Forum "For Solidarity against Intolerance, For a Dialogue of Cultures", that will be held at Tbilisi from 13 to 15 July 1995.

This International Forum is being organized under the joint auspices of Mr. Federico Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO, and Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze, Head of State, Chairman of the Parliament of the Republic of Georgia.

The meeting takes place in 1995, which is the United Nations Year for Tolerance, proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution 48/126 of 20 December 1993 on the initiative of UNESCO. In adopting that resolution, the General Assembly expressed its conviction that "tolerance - the recognition and appreciation of others, the ability to live together with and to listen to others - is the sound foundation of any civil society and of peace".

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* A/50/50.

The primary purpose of the Year is to ensure that tolerance - as both a personal and a political virtue - remains at the forefront of public attention throughout 1995, which marks the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, and to give a much-needed boost to education for tolerance, as the foundation of intercultural understanding, democracy and peace. For these reasons, the Forum is expected to make a significant contribution to peace-building. The International Forum at Tbilisi will bring together eminent personalities of cultural and public life from many countries who will seek to alert the international community and world public opinion to the urgency of the need to counteract and eliminate aggressive intolerance and its various manifestations.

The Forum reaffirms that ignorance of each others ways and lives is a common sense of fear and mistrust between peoples of the world and that their differences have all too often escalated to violence, hatred and prejudice. It will seek concrete ways to promote, through intercultural dialogue, cooperation and solidarity of the world intellectual and cultural community, peace, mutual understanding, respect for human dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Tbilisi Forum may wish to appeal to international community and world public opinion, as well as to the mass media, to take urgent measures to reverse the wave of aggressive intolerance and to promote mutual understanding, respect and confidence. The aim of the Forum is to send a message to the world in favour of tolerance as a prerequisite for a culture of peace and non-violence. As proclaimed in the Constitution of UNESCO, "peace must be founded, if it is not to fall, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind".

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly under item 114 (b) of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Peter CHKHEIDZE
Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative